Atmospheric CO2 Is At A Record Level (& Still Climbing)

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The following is from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration:

Carbon dioxide is accumulating in the atmosphere faster than ever — accelerating on a steep rise to levels far above any experienced during human existence, scientists from NOAA and the Scripps Institution of Oceanographyoffsite link at the University of California San Diego announced today.

Scientists at Scripps, the organization that initiated CO2 monitoring at Mauna Loa in 1958 and maintains an independent record, calculated a May monthly average of 426.7 ppm for 2024, an increase of 2.92 ppm over May 2023's measurement of 423.78 ppm. For Scripps, the two-year jump tied a previous record set in 2020.

From January through April, NOAA and Scripps scientists said CO2 concentrations increased more rapidly than they have in the first four months of any other year. The surge has come even as one highly regarded international reportoffsite link has found that fossil fuel emissions, the main driver of climate change, have plateaued in recent years.

'Over the past year, we've experienced the hottest year on record, the hottest ocean temperatures on record and a seemingly endless string of heat waves, droughts, floods, wildfires and storms,' said NOAA Administrator Rick Spinrad, Ph.D. 'Now we are finding that atmospheric CO2 levels are increasing faster than ever. We must recognize that these are clear signals of the damage carbon dioxide pollution is doing to the climate system, and take rapid action to cut fossil fuel use as quickly as we can.'

Ralph Keeling, director of the Scripps CO2 program that manages the institution's 56-year-old measurement series, noted that year-to-year increase recorded in March 2024 was the highest for both Scripps and NOAA in Keeling Curve history.

'Not only is CO2 now at the highest level in millions of years, it is also rising faster than ever,' said Keeling. 'Each year achieves a higher maximum due to fossil-fuel burning, which releases pollution in the form of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Fossil fuel pollution just keeps building up, much like trash in a landfill.'

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